What is claimed is:

1
72. (Amended) An isolated nucleic acid comprising any one of the following:

(a) a nucleic acid sequence encoding a polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:16;

(b) a nucleic acid sequence at least 90% identical to the nucleic acid sequence of (a) above;

(c) a nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide wherein the polypeptide has conservative amino acid substitutions to the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:16; or

(d) a fragment of the nucleic acid sequence of (a) or (b) above wherein the fragment comprises at least 20 nucleotides.

2
73. The nucleic acid of claim 72, wherein said nucleic acid is selected from the group consisting of DNA and RNA.

3
74. (Amended) The nucleic acid of claim 72, wherein said nucleic acid comprises an open reading frame that encodes a polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:16 or its complement, or a mutant or variant thereof.

4
75. (Amended) The nucleic acid of claim 72, wherein said nucleic acid encodes a polypeptide comprising an amino acid of SEQ ID NO:16 or its complement.

5
76. (Amended) The nucleic acid of claim 74 wherein the nucleic acid encodes a mature form of a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence that is SEQ ID NO:16.

6
77. (Amended) The nucleic acid of claim 75 wherein said nucleic acid encodes a polypeptide comprising an amino acid of SEQ ID NO:16, a mutant or variant thereof.

7
78. An oligonucleotide sequence that is complimentary to and hybridizes under stringent conditions with the nucleic acid of claim 72, a variant or mutant thereof.

8
79. (Amended) The oligonucleotide sequence of claim 78 which is complementary to at least a portion of the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:15, its complement, or a mutant or variant thereof.

9
80. An isolated nucleic acid comprising a nucleotide sequence complementary to at least a portion of a nucleic acid according to claim 74.

10
81. A vector comprising the nucleic acid of claim 72.

82. A cell comprising the vector of claim 81.

83. (Amended) The cell of claim 82 wherein said cell is a prokaryotic or eukaryotic cell comprising the nucleic acid sequence which is SEQ ID NO:15, its complement, or a mutant or variant thereof.

84. A pharmaceutical composition comprising the nucleic acid of claim 72 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

85. (Amended) A process for producing a polypeptide encoded by the nucleic acid of claim 72, said process comprising:

a) providing a cell comprising a vector comprising the nucleic acid of claim 72;

b) culturing said cell under conditions sufficient to express said polypeptide; and

c) recovering said polypeptide,

thereby producing said polypeptide.

86. The process of claim 85 wherein said cell is a prokaryotic or eukaryotic cell.

87. A process for identifying a compound that binds the nucleic acid of claim 72, the process comprising:

a) contacting said nucleic acid with a compound; and

b) determining whether said compound binds said nucleic acid sequence.

88. The compound identified by the process of claim 87.